

The Bread Loaf School of English

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Wyllie Sypher

August 13, 1960

THE TEACHER AS INSECURITY AGENT

Dr. Freeman, Dr. Cook, Members of the Class of 1960, Fellows in our Bread Loaf Community:

In speaking to you this evening I am expected, I know, to put aside what sociologists call my role--my role as teacher--and to come before you as a sage--which is a role no teacher should ever play. Whenever I try to play it before my students I know that I am being a fraud. I have heard that a successful teacher at last reaches the status of a sage, and that he is honored as such; but a teacher is not really a sage. He is a highly skilled middleman, who thrives on the ideas he has taken from others--philosophers, poets, critics--and he conveys these ideas to many students who otherwise would not have met them. So I am going to be honest, and I appear here only as a teacher, a middleman, who wishes to talk briefly about some of the notions I have lately picked up from others who doubtless are sages.

This long apology has a purpose that is not entirely to make me sound humble: for if a teacher is wiser than his students, he has this advantage only because he knows that Socrates was right when he said to the Athenians that he had the wisdom of ignorance--that he knew what he did not know. The teacher is still supposed to be a kind of Socrates, and we say that we believe in the Socratic method of education. But this is now, I think, an absurdity, for we are all teaching in years when our higher education has secretly lost faith in any genuinely Socratic method. Teachers are not encouraged to ask questions that disturb, that may have no answers. We most of all want to be given a creed. We seek belief at all costs. Auden once wrote a poem called The Age of Anxiety. Perhaps a better title for our time would be The Age of Belief: We all say our troubles are caused by a lack of

belief. It would be even better to say that many of our troubles are caused by belief--by our credulity. The universities keep loudly claiming that higher education exists to instill certain values in American youth. Our faculties are enlisted to act as pretorian guards for an American code.

The president of one of our great universities has announced: "Man must know who he is and where he is. We need to send into our culture men and women whose spiritual values are as clearly articulated as their intellectual beliefs. Education which does not define for itself and its individual students the ultimate perspective is potentially evil."

A statement like this drives me right back to Socrates; and I am inclined to say exactly the opposite: namely, that an education which defines for its students a clearly articulated system of beliefs is, by its own definition, limited, restrictive, illiberal. A more damaging word would be dogmatic; and a dogmatic education is likely to produce begots.

I might add that I do not really understand what this term values means as it is now used. My students all use the word values, but they all dodge making what they call value-judgments. If I venture an opinion, they tell me, "Of course that is a value judgment." They are all seeking values--yet I must not make a value judgment. If I do, then I am not being objective. Or they say I am generalizing--the worst thing I can do. I take it that values are beliefs or convictions about what is right or wrong. But I never can get any student to admit this. So here we are: students are quite lost without beliefs; but they feel guilty about passing judgment. They want an education that instills beliefs; but they are supposed to be objective--which, I presume, is our only modern substitute for being Socratic.

The problem, then, is somehow to reconcile the need for belief with the need for questioning: In other words, how to believe without being bigots. The only answer that I myself know is by being truly Socratic, for Socrates of all philoso-

phers was least a bigot. He enjoyed the advantage of belief without the bigotry of being dogmatic. He represents the rarest of all attitudes philosophically: scepticism. To be sceptical is not to cancel out belief; but it is to avoid closed systems. If we are to be really Socratic, the purpose of education, especially in America while it faces so many totalitarian answers abroad, is not to give final answers, but, rather, to get students to heed William Butler Yeats's question: "Who does not distrust complete ideas?"

I do not know what would have happened to science itself if scientists had presumed that man knew exactly who he is and where he is. As Henry Margenau has said, "for more than two centuries science was sterilized by assuming that the classical Newtonian system gave us an ultimate perspective." The new physics, he points out, was made possible only because the closed system of Euclidean geometry was shattered. He adds that the deepest discovery of modern science is the need for "a courageous, healthful scepticism regarding the finality of all basic truths called axioms." Another great scientist, Alfred North Whitehead, says the same thing in other words: "A clash of doctrines is not a disaster--it is an opportunity." This is as true of education as it is of science or religion. Yet our university president wants us to have an "ultimate perspective."

Thus we have got into a bad habit of expecting higher education to give the answers: Ezra Pound said our universities are a conspiracy to prevent the student from learning more than his teachers. Perhaps this is because the very notion of risk has been sapped from our American way of life: we budget our thought the way we budget our lives, and a great deal of higher education has become a form of budgeting--or if not budgeting, a kind of insurance against risky ideas. There is a great deal to be said, I believe, for the view of one of Yeats's friends who remarked, "It is bad manners for a man under thirty to permit himself to be in the right." To be wrong, and often grossly wrong, is one of the privileges and one of the risks we must take if we are going to be educated. If we are not wrong when

we are young, we shall perhaps never be educated. Or else we shall be wrong when we are old; and that is a sadder plight.

If education is to be really humanistic, it must be centered in man, not in orthodox ideas or closed systems. Ortega y Gasset has brilliantly seen that ideas and systems are only a part of the experience of man; otherwise, man is only the product of systems, and we have all had too much of that, from Plato on. The human situation (as all the Greeks except Plato seemed to know) is that man does not have, perhaps never can have, the advantage of an ultimate perspective. That is the privilege of whatever gods there be.

To be more specific: last year a group of intelligent and certainly well-meaning students wanted to know whether I would favor offering a course to be called "The Importance of Religion in Modern Life." To their distress I told them that such a course would be propaganda, for the aim of this course would not be to hold anything in question, but to begin by accepting the premise implied in the very title: that Religion in Modern Life Is Important. These students wanted to be reassured. That is forgivable. But they should not expect a teacher to indoctrinate them. That, I pointed out, is the task or the privilege of their clergyman, and they should turn to him. He can rightly claim to have an ultimate perspective, based upon a faith in the superhuman. Here is a matter for faith, not for the academic curriculum. Any such faith can (and probably should) be formulated in a creed. Yet the purpose of higher education is not to teach or to sustain creeds. It can, and should, study creeds; but it must never support an orthodoxy. Teachers must not be security agents. We have enough of those.

Or to take the recent affidavit required of students who borrow money for their education under the National Defence Act: Each student had to swear "that he does not believe in" any organization that believes in, or teaches, the overthrow of the United States Government by illegal or unconstitutional methods. The penalty was for belief as well as for action. Now it happens that I do not myself

believe in violent action; and Camus has told us what occurs in western history whenever the guillotine becomes an instrument of justice: Prometheus the savior becomes Prometheus the tyrant. Yet I do not think Thomas Jefferson would have been able to sign this affidavit, which sounds to my ears strangely like a creed now imposed on Chinese students in universities under the guidance of Mao. Lately Mao made a special plea to Chinese students to give their allegiance to the communist ideology, which must be protected against all counter-revolutionary theories. Mao confesses that he is anxious about security, and he urges all students to share the fight against any infiltration of anti-party views. University students especially, Mao remarks, are sensitive to anti-party notions, and must constantly be guarded against any suspicious ideas taught in their courses. If such ideas appear, students are cautioned to report them and their source to the security police.

I am not suggesting that Washington is Peking, or that Congress is filled with commissars; but I am suggesting that deviationism is a bogey on both sides of the iron curtain. Both Washington and Peking should know that any idea can be dangerous: that one idea is likely to be as dangerous as another, as the ideas in early Christianity show. The only way to deal with any idea is by scepticism lest it violate the mind; and if there is not a degree of scepticism, our education is in mortal danger of being a mode of propaganda. It is no less propaganda when it instills what our university president called "clearly articulated spiritual values" or an "ultimate perspective." Gertrude Stein once said that remarks are not literature; we may add that propaganda is not education.

The only antiseptic against propaganda is scepticism. The only antiseptic against bigotry is doubt. It is ironic that one kind of bigotry has appeared in our higher education in the guise of science--under the name of the scientific method--or faith in being objective, as my students like to say. One of our major scientists, Michael Polyani, has confessed his own scepticism about objec-

tivity: In a book called Personal Knowledge Polyani says: "I start by rejecting the idea of scientific detachment." Like many "pure" scientists today he sees that we cannot avoid our selves even while we use the scientific method. Each measurement is made by someone, or by an instrument made by someone. So we are always measuring our selves as well as nature. To exclude personal knowledge from science is to destroy science. The scientific method is itself a bigotry when the scientist refuses to admit that he, too, starts from certain convictions that are quite personal. Polyani insists that truth is something that can be thought only by believing it. Or as Werner Heisenberg has said, we now know that what we call science is in part a construct of our own mind. At the remotest reaches of pure science we stand face to face with our selves--"We confront ourselves alone," as Heisenberg puts it. Thus the dogma of objectivity is open to doubt, and the scientific method itself seems to be an orthodoxy which our purest scientists now question. Freud suspected that the most treacherous of scientific methods is psychoanalysis; and lately Norman O. Brown has asked the key question: "What is the psychoanalysis of psychoanalysis?" This is Polyani's question: What personal beliefs lie behind every scientific method?

To doubt the scientific method is to have a sacred concern for truth. That is why the scientist's scepticism about his own method is scientific. Our scientists have discovered what Ortega Y Gasset discovered: that we begin to live authentically only when we begin to doubt, to feel lost. To feel lost is to be insecure; but it is not to deny truth. Paul Tillich says that since God is truth, he is the cause of doubt, not the object of doubt. John Henry Newman knew this when, writing as a Roman cardinal, he saw the growth of dogma within the Church as a warfare of ideas striving for mastery, a never-dying duel that is the very life of religion.

But let me turn to the orthodoxies we find in the teaching of our own subject, literature. One of the standard texts is called The Theory of Literature--widely used to introduce students to poetry, drama, the novel, the arts generally.

The book opens thus: "The first problem that confronts us is, obviously, the subject of literary scholarship: What is literature? What is not literature?

Simple as such questions sound, they are rarely answered clearly." So the authors immodestly go on to answer them clearly--to the comfort, I am sure, of students who leave a course knowing precisely what literature is, how it works, how it gets written, how it is to be judged, where it fails, and, most reassuring of all, what the difference is between literature and what is not literature.

All this reminds me of the other questions students ask: What is poetry? Or worse: What is Art? How, if you please, should I know--clearly, definitely, finally? This is a great deal like asking What Is Love? Yeats disposed of this question--an important one--when he said, "A man does not love a woman because he thinks her clever or admires her, but because he likes the way she has of scratching her head." One of the wisest answers I have myself heard to the question What Is Poetry?--a naive question if there ever was one--was made years ago by Robert Frost while talking to some Amherst students. Pausing a moment, he charitably replied: "Poetry is the kind of thing poets have written." It is a deeply adequate answer; for poets cannot be more clearly defined than their poems. A poet is one who knows that life is ambiguous, and has an unusual talent for telling us so.

No good poem is ever clearly or entirely understood. We can talk about it, but it is never finally explained. Only a bad poem can be fully explained. We work at understanding a good poem. In fact, one test of a good poem is the trouble it causes us to understand it. Besides, poems are written by a special sort of person who, I am sure, does not clearly understand himself. I am persuaded that a poet does not always see what he is doing, or about what, or how, or to whom. That is why he must write the poem. We know that he tries to understand, and often agonizes to know what he means, or how he is to say it. Some very good poems are a result of a struggle the poet loses. Thus the poem is a

kind of surplus value, a byproduct of the poet's effort to understand or to state. By the same token the best education, the best teaching and learning, are an enlightenment that comes during a struggle with a problem to which we may never have a conclusive answer--let alone an orthodox answer. Education is a form of surplus value, a byproduct of questions that must be asked and cannot be fully resolved. Art itself is a surplus value of this sort, and I have often thought that all philosophy worth the name is likewise a surplus value--a byproduct of hammering one's mind against unanswerable questions.

I should judge that our best science is this form of surplus value. By the best science I mean theoretical or "pure" science--which is more than technology. Technology is concerned with answers that work. The technologist must solve his problems successfully. But today the winner of a Nobel prize, Percy Bridgman, says that pure science is first of all concerned with understanding the nature of the problem. It is speculative, and Bridgman calls theoretical science an activity where there are no final answers--often not even accurate answers. For instance, light now seems to be both waves and particles. This does not make sense. So the "pure" scientist accepts both theories, doing what the poet does when he struggles. The surplus value comes from what the scientist cannot entirely formulate by logic. In fact, Whitehead remarks that "Exactness is a fake."

If poetry is the kind of thing poets have written, science is the kind of thing scientists have thought. To say this another way: their doubt becomes creative as soon as they are able to accept it. Pure scientists agree with Ortega y Gasset that to think is to feel one's self lost. Thus scepticism makes education possible. Scepticism is never a popular attitude because it is never an easy or comfortable position to occupy. It gives answers; but they are not final answers. The sceptic can imagine or intuit truth, but cannot formulate truth into a closed system. He cannot trust orthodoxies. Above all, scepticism is receptive to new ideas, and a new idea is unsettling. The playwright Arthur Miller has told

us that "An idea, if it is really new, is a genuine humility for the majority of people; it is an affront not only to their sensibilities but to their deepest convictions."

Here we come to a difference between cynicism and scepticism, for cynicism is destructive, not creative. The cynic thinks he has answers; he operates within the bounds of a narrowly closed system of ideas and lacks the imagination to doubt that things are other than as he sees them--that is, sordid. The difference between cynic and sceptic is shown in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida, where two characters stand opposed: Diomedes and Hector. Diomedes sneers at everything. Hector doubts without sneering. Diomedes has a line. Hector doubts every line. He is a Trojan, but he doubts whether the Trojans should keep Helen in the name of honor. The Trojans feel secure in their code of honor. But Hector asks whether it is right to keep Helen in the name of honor. Must my country always be thought to be in the right? He asks this question because, as he says, "Modest doubt is the beacon of the wise." Modest doubt: he is only repeating what Socrates said when he was defending his life against the Athenians who charged him with corrupting the youth by asking questions that should not be asked. Socrates was doing, in fact, exactly what our government seems to fear we may do in the course of being educated--raising questions to shake the security of our line.

What was Socrates' answer? It is celebrated, and justly: "The unexamined life is not worth living." Any examination raises doubt. However, as Hector shows, along with Socrates, doubt need not destroy belief; it may modify or change belief, but not destroy it. In Hector and Socrates belief co-existed with their doubt. This is a very human and very difficult situation. Belief without doubt is in peril of becoming a line. The great Danish theologian Søren Kierkegaard found he was able to believe precisely because he doubted. Here is the sort of contradiction Socrates found when he insisted that he was wiser than

other Athenians because he knew he did not know. His scepticism led him to a humility that allowed him to accept the inconsistencies in moral life; for Socrates said that in spite of knowing little, he was sure it is wrong to disobey the gods. Socrates was neither cynic nor bigot. He lived and taught without defining any ultimate perspective because he was open to modest doubts.

And now to you who are about to be honored here--most of you teachers: We say that a teacher is the heir of Socrates. If he is, then he must initiate students into a Socratic paradox--that without doubt, no satisfactory belief is possible. I say this in an age seeking the security of orthodoxies and official perspectives.

Here I am, after all, talking like a sage. Nevertheless, it is only too plain that along with my doubts I have convictions about education. My doubt is that you as teachers should formulate for your students a system of values. My conviction is that we can never clearly know what man is or where he is, but that we must continue to ask. The literature we teach helps us ask.

BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENTS

1961

All matters relative to your room and board, mail, and any charges you may incur (apart from the regular bill for tuition, board and room) should be referred to Mr. Donovan, Resident Manager, at the INN DESK.

For details regarding the management of the School, please make inquiry at the DIRECTOR'S OFFICE. All matters pertaining to your initial registration and payment of bills, information about courses, lectures, and graduate credit should be referred to the SECRETARY'S OFFICE. Director R. L. Cook and Miss Lillian Becker, Secretary, are the staff to whom you should bring your request for information about details of the School.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Students should obtain confirmation of their courses from the Secretary's Office as soon after arrival at Bread Loaf as possible. Students who have not completed registration of courses in advance must personally consult with the Director. Appointments may be made with Miss Becker.

Registration is not completed until a registration card, a "notify in case of accident" card, a college library registration card, and, in certain cases, an off-campus address card have been returned to the Secretary's Office. Please be sure to fill in the registration card on both sides.

A representative of the College Bursar's Office will be in the Blue Parlor on Wednesday, June 28. It is requested that all bills which have not been paid be attended to at this time. Receipts for bills paid in advance may be obtained at this time.

Please keep in mind the fact that if you wish to change your status from that of a non-credit student to that of a credit student or vice versa in any course, this change must be made on or before July 3. All changes in courses must be made with the approval of the Director. For a change from one course to another, after July 3, a charge of one dollar will be made. All persons desiring to visit classes in which they are not enrolled must also obtain permission from the Director.

MAIL SCHEDULE

Outgoing mail must be posted not later than 9:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. Mail will be ready for distribution at the following hours: 10:30 A.M. and 3:30 P.M.

MEAL HOURS

In a day or two the regular seating plan will go into effect. Please consult the chart on the dining room door to ascertain your table assignments.

<u>Daily</u>	<u>Sunday</u>
Breakfast 7:30-8:00 A. M.	Breakfast 8:00-8:30 A. M.
Luncheon 12:45-1:00 P. M.	Dinner 1:00-1:30 P. M.
Dinner 6:00-6:15 P. M.	Supper 6:00-6:30 P. M.

Since all of the waiters and waitresses are students, it is urgently requested that all students come to meals promptly, especially to breakfast, so that those who are waiting on table may be able to reach their classes on time. In the morning the door will be closed at 8:00. No students may be served breakfast after that time. Please do not ask the head waiter to make exceptions to this regulation. He has no authority to do so.

SUPPLIES

Stationery, notebook paper, pencils, ink, etc., may be purchased at the Bookstore, post cards at the Front Desk, and cigarettes at the Snack Bar. It is impossible for credit to be extended, so please do not ask for it.

BOOKSTORE

It is urgently requested that students purchase their texts immediately because it is frequently necessary for us to order additional copies. It is impossible to allow students to maintain charge accounts at the Bookstore, and we hope that students will cooperate by not asking for any favors of this kind. The hours when the Bookstore will be open will be announced soon.

BREAD LOAF PARKING REGULATIONS

A preliminary notice concerning parking has been made in the bulletin. Stringently enforced state laws prohibit the parking of cars on the side of the highway, and it is requested that students and guests endeavor to keep the roads clear in front of the Inn. Students at Tamarack may park their cars on the lawn under the trees by the main road. All others should use the parking space near the Barn.

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the Little Theatre at 8:15 Wednesday evening, Dr. Freeman, Director of the Summer Schools, and Mr. Cook will speak. An informal reception will be held in the Recreation Hall in the Barn directly after the preliminary meeting in the Little Theatre.

Mr. Robert Frost will give a lecture-reading at 8:15 P.M. on Monday, July 3.

HENRY JAMES' VISION AND MR. RUSKIN'S CHALK-MARK

Bread Loaf School of English

June 28, 1961

1.

A Truce to All Rigidities

When the poet referred to the meeting of mountain and man I am sure he never assumed any equality of animate and inanimate objects. The meeting was unmistakably unilateral. Here at Bread Loaf not only does man meet mountain in this beautiful mountain bowl, but they meet under special circumstances. We come up onto the mountain to participate in an educational experience. The experience is not an extension of any unilateral man-and-mountain affair, but the fulfilment of a multilateral human one. Nearly all of us here this evening are at present, have been, or will be teachers, and we meet here to share our varied experiences.

Peculiar to a school like Bread Loaf in the summer is the reversal of the role of teacher and student. Those of you who have been teaching--the faculty only excepted--are now students who have come here to experience a maximal literary exposure in a short summer session. The avowed purpose is to re-examine ideas and literary attitudes in key works, authors and literary periods, and freshen experience with new insights and discoveries. Beyond this overt aim there will be much more which Bread Loaf has to offer in the 42nd session, but I prefer a great deal of it should remain unplanned. With these prefatory remarks in mind let me turn to the subject of my talk which is about Henry James' happy vision and John Ruskin's chalk-mark.

In 1877, on one of his many trips to Italy, James was revisiting Turin and Genoa, Spezia and Florence, and while "doing" the latter, he discovered in a shop-window a series of amusing little books by John Ruskin called Mornings in Florence. He hastily entered and purchased them, and stuffing them in his pocket continued his pilgrimage to the Santa Maria Novella. A little embarrassed to confess it, James nevertheless tells us how, as he sat in the beautiful Church filled with remarkable aesthetic treasures, he took the little books from his pocket, and, one by one, since they were brief, read them in great part, then and there, while waiting the arrival of a friend. The scrupulous James excused his profanation by remarking that to occupy oneself with light literature in a great religious edifice is justly deplorable. Yet, self-defensively, he explained, "a traveller has to make the most of odd moments."

The aesthetic dogmatism of Mr. Ruskin's light literature riled him. There was, for instance, the tomb of the Marchesa Strozzi-Ridolfi upon which Giotto had painted four superb little pictures. What did Mr. Ruskin say about them? Henry James was curious. Here was the tomb. Here were the books. So he picked up a volume and read the comment of the famous English 19th century art critic. One of the frescoes, which pictured the birth of the Virgin, showed a figure coming through a door. "Of ornament," wrote Mr. Ruskin, "there is only the entirely simple outline of the vase which the servant carries; of color two or three masses of sober red and pure white, with brown and grey. That is all. And if you are pleased with this you can see Florence. But if not, by all means amuse yourself there, if you find it amusing, as long as you like; you can never see it." This last sentence brought James up short, and his friend, too who had meanwhile arrived to share these treasures of Florence. Are there not a great many ways

of seeing Florence? thought James. As many ways of seeing it as there are ways of seeing most beautiful and interesting things. Then James added firmly, "it is very dry and pedantic to say that the happy vision depends upon our squaring our toes with a certain chalk-mark." Mr. Ruskin's chalk-mark, for example. James concluded characteristically, "We see Florence wherever and whenever we enjoy it."

I don't want to worry an old bone, but it is of some consequence to know what particular viewpoint we take toward the pictures we see, the countries in which we travel, the books we read, our educational experience. The old bone here is James' disagreement with Mr. Ruskin on how to take one's art in Florence and elsewhere. Later in life James will have a disturbing artist's quarrel with H.G. Wells over the motives and means of literary art, although James was not by temperament a quarrelsome man. He was not acerbic; he was only passionately devoted to art's higher purposes and its practical justification in a world of gimcrackery.

Similarly, we should be concerned with what is happening to the objectives and results of education in a world where, as one of the top educators in a truly great Canadian University remarked, not facetiously, the M.A. degree is now "hopelessly debased" and the Ph.D. is "disintegrating." For the moment let us pursue James, and I think you will see clearly enough the parallel with our motives and intentions in education here at the Bread Loaf School of English. What James asks for in the passages which I have quoted is the ultimate in aesthetic responsiveness--a free range, a variety of viewpoints, a relativism in attitude. Above all, he wants to enjoy art wherever and whenever it is to be enjoyed. And he wants to enjoy it with as little dryness and pedantry as possible. He is here close to the impressionistic attitude of Pater and Anatole France, and he would seem to be running counter to modern literary criticism which emphasizes the

explication of the text, or close analysis. Would this disturb James? Would he be offended and affronted by what has happened to his own books? Or does he uphold the present view only in relation to a gay responsiveness in the presence of the treasures of great art in Italy?

Now with some reason, as we shall presently see, I think it can be justly contended that James would not proscribe close criticism. He was not a superficial glancer or taster himself. He returned frequently to the Italian Churches. He looked again and again in Venice at his favourite Venetian painters--Tintoret, Carpaccio, Bellini--and he made it a point to see as much as possible all there was to be seen of the great Italian art, whether in galleries or in churches. But, and I think this is an important distinction, he didn't do it with the boring conscientiousness of his Unitarian minister in The American. Nor did he get an "aesthetic headache" like the sadly uninitiated Christopher Newman, His American hero of the novel of the same title, who tried to absorb too much art too quickly in his initial visit at the Louvre. James' class shows in his deliberate but not stolid masterpieces--in The Portrait of a Lady or The Ambassadors. Like Keats' spinning spider, James indulges in a large circuiting. He circumscribes his subject and he moves in from the periphery to the center. He takes his time. Some readers think he takes too much time but whether he takes too much time is not of much moment. What is our concern is the principle under which he operates and it might be called the poet's principle, which is to take one's time, indulge in a Thoreauvian "wide halo of ease and leisure," indeed, walk a bit as though along the colonnades at Plato's Academy and take views from the garden at the Athenian sky, or, if you will, the Vermont sky, a Wordsworthian or Brontian or Frostian walk for pleasure, refreshment and renewal.

James says as much when he later reproached Mr. Ruskin for missing the "delightful truth that, after all, art is made for us and not we for it." He reminds us--with Mr. Ruskin in mind--"this idea that the value of a work is the amount of illusion it yields is conspicuous by its absence." In short, Mr. Ruskin is too literal. I can't forbear further quoting James. He seems so acute and his acuity is so applicable to our purposes and objectives here at the English School--and, will you excuse me if I contend--so right for education all over our country where I think we are in something of a quandry about the whole business. James says further: "Instead of a garden of delight, he (Mr. Ruskin) finds a sort of assize court in perpetual session." Mr. Ruskin amuses James in being so solemn about the whole affair of art appreciation.

James thinks--and of course he may be very wrong, depending upon the peephole from which you look at things--the garden of delight is a place where illusion is dominant. In the kingdom of the imagination a wave of Prospero's wand transfigures the commonplace into the enchanted. Literature is a garden of delight; it is a place of illusion; it is an area, a breathing space, a lebensraum, as it were, where human responsibilities are "lightened and suspended." After all, I do not have to chase the white whale, I do not have to surrender the runaway negro slave, I do not have to withhold the name of my paramour as I read in three great American novels. I can feel all the intensity it is humanly possible to feel but I do not have to do these things--the anguish is not mine although it may be shared vicariously. The world I visit in Lear or Moby Dick is a world where things are at sixes and sevens but when I have finished no matter how real the illusion has been, my responsibilities have, in truth, been "lightened and suspended."

Mr. Ruskin is preoccupied by "error." James may be preoccupied by delight and illusion. One thing is apparent--they don't and they wouldn't agree on how to look at a picture and I suspect they wouldn't agree on how to read a poem or how to take education. James is opposed to considering the world of art as "a region (to be) governed by a kind of Draconic legislation." I'm with him here, as we say colloquially. If this were the Reformation, I'd include the following statement of James as one of the ninety-five theses, to be nailed on the court door at Wittenberg. "A truce to all rigidities is the law of the place." Let there be, in effect, ways and views, each with its own rationale and principles, its adherents and partisans, but let there be a generally pervasive feeling of delight. Suppose art is an illusion. Is it not possible to accept the reality of the illusion, to take delight in it, and to enjoy it as an amateur plays a sport as he says, for fun? Our teachers at Bread Loaf are professionals who have not lost an amateur's enthusiasm.

I once heard Dr. Edward Teller, the Nobel physicist, give an impassioned talk on the topic of education, in the atomic age, and he brought the audience up short by one of the truest--in the sense that we've all felt or said it--and most damaging possible statements about education. "I am not sure that I understand myself," remarked Dr. Teller, "but to the extent that I do understand myself, I did not learn it in school." He did not learn it in school! Yet this is what education is all about, as the Greeks knew: "to have the full use of your powers along lines of excellence in a life affording scope." Dr. Teller--and most of the rest of us--learn so little about ourselves in school, and it is not always the student who is at fault. At another point in the dynamic talk, Dr. Teller in a gruff terribly sincere way said--and I quote this for the benefit of all of us here, but chiefly for and against myself: "We have not taught our children

literature; we have inoculated them against it." If we keep this statement in mind perhaps this is why in the U.S.A. many of our writers were lucky in getting so little formal education in the conventional way. I recall, among others, Franklin, Irving, Melville, Whitman, Clemens, James, Howells, Frost, Dreiser, Hemingway, and Faulkner, and Henry Adams, a Harvard graduate, also seems to think he got more by accident than by system. It is a rather subversive thought that the books our grandchildren will read will probably be written by writers who have escaped the rigors of formal education, while the merit scholars settle down to the planned career of routine competence.

"A truce to all rigidities is the law of the place," is not an idle statement uttered to create a bit of a stir. At least this wasn't James' intent. He would urge, if I follow him correctly, to care enough so you review the picture, re-think the poem, re-read the novel. When James revisited Siena, "an Italian hill-city bronzed and seasoned by the ages," it did occur to him that perhaps he ought to have looked into the Siena archives which one of the considerate custodians kindly made accessible to him. However, he didn't take advantage of the hospitality, but "this incurable student of loose meanings and stray relics and odd references and dim analogies," did spend the afternoons after finishing his morning stint at the writing desk by strolling musingly upon the Lizza. "The great and subtle thing if you are not a strenuous specialist, in places of a heavily charged historic consciousness, is to profit by the sense of that consciousness--or in other words to cultivate a relation with the oracle--after the fashion that suits yourself...." In this manner "the fine distilled essence of the matter" is breathed in from the very stones. The stroller gathers from the vary air what is most to his purpose and James thought "the indestructible mixture of lived

things" was more important "than any interminable list of numbered chapters and verses." True, James was no scholar. Was he then an anti-scholar? By no means. If art is the "one corner of human life" in which the human being can indulge his predilection for "the indestructible mixture of lived things," under what condition is it best realized? The one condition is, as he says, that "we shall have felt the representational impulse." By representational impulse I think he means the poetry in the poem, the life within the novel, the image, line and color in the picture. We realize the "representational impulse" best when we are free to contemplate it without apology or compromise. We may have to learn to detect it by parallelism or analogy; we may have to find it by discussion with those who have already made discoveries; and we may have to defend our own insights as to its exercise against the persuasions of conformity and the prejudices of convention. But the fact is when we know what we are responding to--the representational impulse; and when we know what we are looking for--the indestructible mixture of living things, we are on the way. At these times I expect what James calls "the chariot of fire favors fusion rather than promotes analysis." Like Ezekiel we take off, we fuse, we share, we feel euphoria with Wordsworth in "Daffodils," or rapport with George Eliot in Middlemarch, or kinship with Robert Frost in "Acquainted with the Night."

2.

The Representational Impulse

Now perhaps the interval between taking a stroll in the Jamesian garden of delight and attendance at the perpetual session of the assize court has been too

long. I have taken the stroll recently and I did it at the counsel of a friend who teaches Slavic studies in a large Eastern university. I told him how once many years ago I had read with great gusto the Russian novelists, especially Dostoevsky. "Then you should read Sholokhov," he told me. So I promptly stopped in the Vermont Bookshop in Middlebury and ordered a copy of And Quiet Flows the Don. When my copy came in the Signet edition, I noticed a statement by Maxim Gorky on the back cover in which he asserted Sholokhov's novel could be compared with War and Peace. I packed it away with a host of other books and when the right time came last fall out by the Pacific, I read it. The moment I started And Quiet Flows the Don I knew I had the right book in my hand at the right time. I hadn't the slightest desire to put it down and pick up War and Peace. From the opening scene at the Melekhov farm in the village of Tatarsk close to the Don to the closing scenes where we watched the burial on the steppe of Valet, the scalesman at Mokhov's mill, who has wavered in his loyalty to the Cossacks and for his defection is summarily shot, Sholokov's novel is an object lesson for Carlyle's epigrammatic assertion that "narration is linear and action is solid." Moreover, it is released by James' representational impulse, and, in turn, invokes it.

The narration in And Quiet Flows the Don runs true as a taut string, and the action, which is often sudden and drastic, is like a series of knots in the tautened string. When young Gregor Melekhov, the chief character, finds himself involved with the young wife of a Cossack neighbor, he takes the neighbor's wife and goes to the big estate of an old troop commander of the Ataman's Lifeguard Regiment at Yagodnoe and becomes General Lisnitsky's coachman.

Once while driving Eugene Lisnitsky, the general's son, to the station a long way off, he has an experience. The winter was just beginning to break during

the fourth week of Lent. The thaw had so eaten away the snow the road by which he was to return was all but impassable. There is an unforgettable scene at an Ukrainian village, twenty miles from the station on the homeward journey where Gregor almost loses his horses in crossing a stream. In two pages Sholokov gives us the action, and I recall the ultimate part of Carlyle's neat apothegm--'action is solid'. I also recall by way of parallelism the catastrophic crossing of the flooded stream in Faulkner's As I Lay Dying, and also the scene of the breaking up of the ice on the Hudson in Cooper's Satanstoe. Sholokov wastes less time than Faulkner or Cooper. He gets all the essentials in five or six hundred words. The novel moves briskly from beginning to end, whether Sholokov is narrating the passionate affairs of the Cossacks, the inter-racial violence of the Ukrainian and the Cossack, the harvest scenes on the Steppe, fishing on the Don, the bloody battle pieces at the border with the Hungarians and Germans, or the episode of Gregor's father driving home over the snowbound Steppe after a bibulous night out and the undirected blind mare wandering off the road and dragging the sledge into the open whirlpool of the Don. It is a novel of concurrent scenes like a series of fine cinematographic shots. The Russian novelists are adept at this, and like all specialists they make a habit of a skill.

Let us take two scenes from possibly fifty (I am not exaggerating), and the first I have chosen is where old General Lisnitsky peremptorily orders Gregor, his coachman, to accompany him on a wolf-hunt. The scene takes exactly five pages to narrate (Tolstoy's stirring wolf-hunt in War and Peace is much longer). It is one of the most exciting hunts I've ever read, not excluding Faulkner's The Bear. If you are a critical reader in the garden of delight, hot after the great moments in literature, you will still have to admit what Sholokov has done has been well done, even if there is no sense of trembling on a threshold of meaning

such as we get in the scene where Mrs. Ramsay is knitting the stocking with the heather mixture in Virginia Woolf's To a Lighthouse. The scene in Sholokov's novel is not only in keeping with the old general's character, it is also intrinsically a part of the narrative, and reflects in its enactment more things than the fever pitch which we all feel as General Lisnitsky's borzois start up and relentlessly pursue a shaggy, dirty, brown wolf which races cunningly over the Russian steppe, until it is overtaken by the hounds and knifed to death by Gregor. When the wolf is chased out of a ravine into the open steppe where Cossacks are ploughing, Gregor, the young coachman, sees that the General and he have ridden over eight miles, from Yagodnoe to the outskirts of Tatarsk, Gregor's native village by the Don.

At the killing there is one fine stroke--not as psychologically searching as in Virginia Woolf but nevertheless fine in an associational way. The wolf has given the borzois and the huntsmen a run for it, through the dry brush and thistle-covered valley, through the oaks and alders, and finally onto the furrowed fields of the steppe. In one stroke you get the sense of pace and fury. "Suddenly," the translation reads, "the wolf squatted down in a deep furrow. The foremost hound flew right over him and fell with its forelegs tucked beneath it; the old bitch following tried to stop, her hind quarters scraping along the cloddy, ploughed ground; but unable to halt in time, she tumbled against the wolf. The hunted animal shook his head violently, and the bitch ricocheted off him. Now the mass of hounds fastened on the wolf, and they all dragged for some yards over the ploughed land." Action is solid. Narration is linear. This scene could not be more compact. What it reads like in Russian I'll never know but of one thing I can be sure. How many times have I seen animals possessed by fear or courage,

as the case may be, come to a sliding, skidding stop. For example, in the Playa Mexico in Mexico City, when a brave bull came out of a dark tunnel so fast it started to skid midway across the ring, its hindlegs beneath its body. Perhaps this is little more than recognition on my part as I, a reader in the garden of delight, sees only something in nature being duplicated in representational art. But here indeed is "the indestructible mixture of lived things," almost as imaginatively suggestive as Mrs. Woolf's heather stocking, because, standing in the furrowed field of the steppe where he had been ploughing was a young Cossack, Stefan Astakhov, with a peaked, red-banded cap. It is Stefan's wife, the passionate young black-eyed Aksinia, whom Gregor has seduced. This is not a Hardean coincidence. The furrowed field of the steppe is exactly where you would find Stefan on a day like this. The only coincidence is the fact the wolf drew the huntmen in this direction. Compounding Sholokov's accuracy in observation is a sense of the fortuitous. Here it is the encounter of enemies. How often we see the forgotten face of a friend or adversary arise to haunt us in-and-out of books! That Sholokov has taken advantage of this is only coincidental. His use of it is right as rain.

Similarly, there is a scene in a harvest field. With this reference I shall close the discussion which has, as you can readily see, infinite ramifications as have most things to the habitués of the garden of delight, whether that stroller is called Erwin Panofsky, Erich Auerbach or Robert Payne, or by your own name. Here is another chariot of fire in Mikhail Sholokov's And Quiet Flows the Don. On a sultry July day when a summery haze spread over the steppe the entire village of Tatarsk was out forking and stooking wheat and leading horses in the great annual harvest. The workers were hot, sweaty, thirsty, and pre-occupied, but they

did notice a tiny cloud of dust moving swiftly along the distant high road from the village. Some of them stopped to watch because the horseman was moving so rapidly. Momentarily the horseman disappeared behind a hollow, then he reappeared, a dusty red flag fluttering in his right hand. Now he drew close and they could see him and, as he passed, he shouted, "Alarm!" like a latter-day Paul Revere. This is all, but, as Sholokov records, "a flake of yellow soapy foam flew from his horse and fell into a footprint." A harvest hand, watching, stared after the retreating figure, "the horse's croup, wet, and glittering like a steel blade, remained impressed in his memory." But as though to belie the finger of the novelist pointed in the direction of the Cossack harvester and what he sees--the glittering rump of the sweating horse--there is the fine stroke of the gout of foam falling in the footprint. It is this that arrests the attention. In this scene Sholokov makes it possible for any one of us to focus on any one of several possibilities--the kind of day, the season, the steppe, the harvester, the horseman, the horse, the alarm. Since it is July 1914, the reader anticipates the meaning of the alarm before these harvesting Cossacks on the Don. Graphicness compounds urgency and action in an infinitesimal natural stroke--the sight of the yellow flake of foam settling in the horse's footprint. A moment ago the horse was there. It is like seeing water filling the depression one's footprint makes on a moist beach, or the crooked print of a five-toed Old Ben when glimpsed by the youthful Ike McCaslin in Faulkner's The Bear. This is the beginning of World War I and what is true for the Cossacks at Tatarsk is true all over the great, wide steppe and, by extension, in England, in France, in Italy, in Germany, and eventually, in the United States. This is how the war came, even if down in Sarajevo so relatively slight an event as the murder of the Archduke Ferdinand by a crazy

student is what triggered the whole bloody mess. In effect, this is the representational impulse in operation.

Like the crew of the Pequod, all of us here at Bread Loaf face the poem or play, the essay or novel, the assigned reading, and we see in it what Starbuck and Fedallah, Queequeg and Stubb respectively saw in the gold coin nailed by Ahab to the masthead, a mirror reflecting the mind of the observer. What does a scene in a novel or a line in a play mean? Certainly something, but as T.S.Eliot once said, "the possibilities of meaning of 'meaning' in poetry are so extensive, that one is quite aware that one's knowledge of the meaning even of what oneself has written is extremely limited, and that its meaning to others, at least so far as there is some consensus of interpretation among persons apparently qualified to interpret, is quite as much a part of it as what it means to oneself. But when the meaning assigned is too clearly formulated, then one reader who has grasped a meaning of a poem may happen to appreciate it less exactly, enjoy it less intensely, than another person who has the discretion not to inquire too insistently. So finally, the skeptical practitioner of verse tends to limit his criticism of poetry to the appreciation of vocabulary and syntax, the analysis of line, metric and cadence; to stick as closely to the more trustworthy sense as possible."

If we are lucky up here on the mountain, which is to say, if we exercise a contemplative readiness, there will be chariots of fire, the burning on the bush and ladders in the sky, quite as portentous as they were for Ezekiel and Moses and Joseph in the elder days. But these happy visions will not be imposed upon you. Rigidities will not be the order of the day. You will have to exercise the representational impulse in your own way. The only expectation is that you do exercise it. Readiness is all.

Bread Loaf School of English

1961 Seniors

Asals, Frederick John, Jr.

Baker, Ellis Benjamin, IV (President)

Baker, Mary Ellen

Bell, Miriam Perry

Bigoness, J. William

Chaffee, Thomas Little

Davis, Celina Josephine

DeSimone, Leonard Arthur

Diamond, Elizabeth

Diskin, Lahna Faga

Henry, John Francis

Howick, John David

Hyatt, Lyris

Kuryloski, Dorothy Joan

Lair, Robert Leland

Lebischak, Constance Joan

McCornack, Richard Kelly

McGhee, James H.

Moore, Gerald Vincent

Pomeroy, Jane Seward

Rasmussen, Arnold Hansen

Roy, Eugene Laurent

Ulbricht, Beverly Anne

White, Sue Moody

Wodock, Donald Brude

Wood, Theodore Edmundson Brown

BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH
1961
General Statistics

Student attendance by states:
(according to winter address)

Arizona	1
Colorado	2
Connecticut	11
Delaware	1
District of Columbia	5
Florida	3
Illinois	13
Indiana	3
Kansas	1
Kentucky	1
Maine	2
Maryland	3
Massachusetts	22
Michigan	6
Missouri	1
New Hampshire	9
New Jersey	9
New York	33
North Carolina	1
Ohio	8
Oklahoma	1
Oregon	1
Pennsylvania	22
Rhode Island	3
South Carolina	4
Utah	1
Vermont	10
Virginia	4
Washington	1
West Virginia	1
Wisconsin	1
Canada	6
Puerto Rico	1

(30 states & D.C. represented)

Total student attendance	191
Men students	69
Women students	122
Old students	113
New students	78
Candidates for a Midd. M.A.	133
Graduated pre-1955 (& 1955)	107
Graduated post-1955	84
Undergraduates	4
Number of colleges repr.	121
Off-campus students	30
Scholarship students	8
Seniors	26
Prospective 1962 seniors	26
Veterans	5
Auditors	15
Working for 8 credits	9
" " 7 "	7
" " 6 "	127
" " 5 "	3
" " 4 "	23
" " 3 "	0
" " 2 "	6

Attendance by courses:

Modern literary criticism	26	Curriculum and methods	22
Teaching of literature	26	Chaucer	38
History of English language	27	Victorian writers and society	26
The art of fiction	46	Consciousness in later Am. lit.	47
Ideas as lit. in 19th C. Am.	15	Stagecraft	10
Metaphor, symbol, and myth	44	Anal. & writing of sh. st. & essays	26
The Renaissance & Spenser	19	Milton	31
Swift and Pope	18	Dr. Johnson and his circle	16
Classical drama	26	Ancient epic and romance	35

Colleges Represented at Bread Loaf - 1961 (Total 121)

Acad. of the New Church	Grinnell Coll.
Albion Coll. (2)	Harvard (3)
Alma Coll.	Hobart Coll.
Amherst	Houghton Coll.
Bishop' U.	Hunter Coll.
Blackburn Coll.	Indiana U. (3)
Bob Jones U. (3)	Kalamazoo Coll.
Boston Coll. (2)	Kent St. U.
Brigham Young U.	Keuka Coll.
Bryn Mawr	Knox Coll.
Butler U.	Longwood Coll.
Capital U. (2)	Misericordia (Dallas, Pa.)
Central YMCA Coll. (Chicago)	MacMurray Coll.
The Citadel	Mercer U.
Colby Coll.	Merrimack Coll.
Coll. of N. Rochelle	Middlebury (12)
Concordia Sem.	Mt. Holyoke (2)
Conn. Coll. for Women	Mt. Union Coll.
Dakota Wesleyan U.	Nazareth Coll.
Dartmouth (4)	Notre Dame Coll. (Staten Isl.)
Davidson Coll.	Notre Dame U.
De Paul (Chicago)	Oberlin (2)
De Pauw	Oklahoma U.
Earlham Coll.	Ottawa U.
Eastern Ill. St. Coll.	Otterbein Coll.
Emerson Coll.	Penn. St. U. (2)
Fordham U.	Princeton (4)
George Peabody	Queens Coll.
George Washington U.	
Gettysburg Coll.	

Radcliffe	U. of Pittsburgh (3)
Randolph-Macon	U. of Puget Sound
Regis Coll. (2)	U. of Rochester
Roberts Wesleyan Coll.	U. of Saskatchewan
Simmons	U. of Scranton
Smith (3)	U. of Toronto
Southwestern Coll.	U. of Vermont
Stanford U.	U. of Wichita
St. Lawrence U. (2)	U. of Wisconsin
St. Mary of the Springs (3)	Valparaiso U.
St. Petersburg Jr. Coll.	Vassar
St. Xavier (Chicago)	Wellesley (2)
St. U. of Iowa	Wesleyan U.
Syracuse (2)	W. Va. Inst. of Tech.
Temple U.	Western Ill. U. (2)
Tufts	Wheaton Coll.
U. of Chicago	William and Mary
U. of Cincinnati	Williams Coll.
U. of Denver	Wisconsin St. Coll.
U. of Georgia	Wofford Coll.
U. of Hawaii	Yale (5)
U. of Kansas	
U. of Maine (2)	
U. of Manitoba	Albany St. T.C. (6)
U. of Mass. (2)	Geneseo St. T.C.
U. of Minnesota	Keene T. C. (6)
U. of N. H.	Kutztown St. T.C. (2)
U. of North Carolina	Lockhaven St. T.C.
U. of Pennsylvania (4)	Mansfield St. T.C.
	Montclair St. T.C. (2)

No. Adams St. T.C.

Plymouth T. C.

Shippensburg St. T.C. (2)

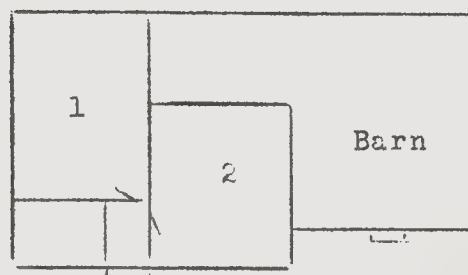
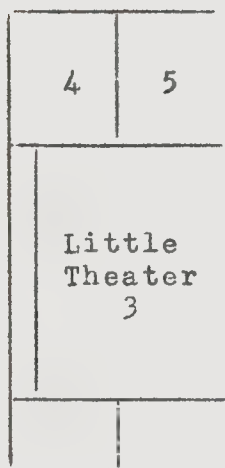
Slippery Rock St. T.C.

T. C. of Conn.

Trenton St. T. C.

West Chester St. T. C. (2)

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES 1961



8:30 A.M.

1	Modern Literary Criticism	Mr. Sypher	Barn 2
87	Teaching of Literature	Mr. Lindley	Barn 1
9	History of the English Language	Mr. Anderson	Little Th. 5
21	The Art of Fiction	Miss Drew	Little Th. 3
15	Ideas as Lit. in 19th C. America	Mr. Horsford	Little Th. 4

9:30 A.M.

53	Metaphor, Symbol, and Myth	Mr. Davis	Little Th. 3
79	The Renaissance and Spenser	Mr. Kelley	Little Th. 5
33	Swift and Pope	Mr. Stanlis	Barn 2
103	Classical Drama	Mr. Hadas	Barn 1

10:30 A.M.

86	Curriculum and Methods	Mr. Lindley	Little Th. 5
19	Chaucer	Mr. Anderson	Barn 2
57	Victorian Writers and Society	Mr. Sypher	Barn 1
41	Consciousness in Later Amer. Lit.	Mr. Horsford	Little Th. 3

11:30 A.M.

7b	Stagecraft	Mr. Volkert	Little Th. 3
17	Analysis and Writing of Short Stories and Essays	Mr. Davis	Little Th. 5
32	Milton	Mr. Kelley	Barn 2
24	Dr. Johnson and His Circle	Mr. Stanlis	Little Th. 4
104	Ancient Epic and Romance	Mr. Hadas	Barn 1

THE BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

Program for the 1961 Session

Monday, July 3	Robert Frost - Poetry Reading - Little Theater 8:15 P.M.
Saturday, July 8	Square Dance - The Barn - 8:45 P.M.
Monday, July 10	Donald Davidson - Poetry Reading - Little Theater, 7:15 P.M.
Thursday, July 13	Ballad Sing - The Barn - 9:00 P.M.
Saturday, July 15	Square Dance - The Barn - 8:45 P.M.
Monday, July 17	Howard Nemerov - Poetry Reading - Little Theater, 7:15 P.M.
Friday, July 21	Three One-Act Plays - Little Theater, 8:30 P.M. <u>Miss Julie</u> by August Strindberg <u>The Lesson</u> by Eugene Ionesco <u>The Sandbox</u> by Edward Albee
Saturday, July 22	Square Dance - The Barn - 8:45 P.M.
Monday, July 24	Malcolm Cowley - A Lecture - Little Theater, 7:15 P.M.
Saturday, July 29	Square Dance - The Barn - 8:45 P.M.
Monday, July 31	William Hazlitt Upson - "Ergophobia" Little Theater, 7:15 P.M.
Friday, August 4	Eugene O'Neill's <u>The Touch of a Poet</u> Little Theater, 8:30 P.M.
Saturday, August 5	Square Dance - The Barn - 8:45 P.M.
Saturday, August 12	Commencement Exercises - Little Theater 8:15 P.M.

BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH 1961

MEAL HOURS:

	Daily		Sunday
*Breakfast	7:30-8:00	Breakfast	8:00-8:30
Luncheon	12:45-1:00	Dinner	1:00-1:15
Dinner	6:00-6:15	Supper	6:00-6:15

*Saturday breakfast will be served from 8:00 to 8:30 a. m.

INVITATION: Sunday after-dinner coffee is served in the Blue Parlor.

MAIN DESK: Mr. Thomas Donovan, Manager; Mr. Irving R. Hulteen, Mr. Wilfred Holton
Weekdays 8:00 a. m.-8:00 p. m. (Switchboard open until 10:00 p. m.)
Sundays 8:00 a. m.-1:00 p. m. 7:00 p. m.-8:00 p. m.

POST OFFICE: Open weekdays from 8:00 a. m. to 6:00 p. m. Closed on Sunday
Outgoing mail should be posted by 8:00 a. m. and 4:00 p. m.
Incoming mail is ready for distribution at 10:00 a. m. and 5:00 p. m.

LIBRARY HOURS: Miss Ruth Pillsbury; Miss Ara Golman, assistant
Monday through Friday 8:15 a. m.-12:30 p. m.; 2:00 p. m.-5:00
7:15 p. m.-10:00 p. m.
Saturday 9:00 a. m.-12:00 noon; 2:00 -4:00 p. m.
Sunday 9:00 a. m.-12:00 noon; 7:15 - 10:00 p. m.

The library will be closed during all special lectures as announced.

BOOKSTORE HOURS: Mr. Irving R. Hulteen.
Monday-Friday: 8-9:30 a. m.; 1:30-2:30 p. m. Saturday: 8-10:00 a. m.

SNACK BAR HOURS: Lucy Beckley, Eric Brooker
Open 8:30 a. m.-10:30 p. m.

CLINIC: Miss Eileen Morey, Nurse. Infirmary in Birch Cottage, Room 2.
Weekdays 8:00 a. m.-8:30 a. m.; 1:30-2:00 p. m.; 6:45-7:15 p. m.
Sundays 8:00 a. m.-9:00 a. m.; 2:00-2:30 p. m.; 6:45-7:15 p. m.

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE HOURS: Mr. Cook is on call at all times.
Monday-Friday 8:30 a. m.-12:00 noon; 1:30-2:15 p. m.
Saturday: 8:30 a. m.-12:00 noon

SECRETARY'S OFFICE HOURS: Miss Lillian Becker
Weekdays: 8:15 a. m.-12:30 p. m.; 1:30 p. m.-2:30 p. m.
Saturday: 8:30 a. m.-12:30 p. m.

TAXI SCHEDULE: Trips are made Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoon.
The charge is \$1.00 for a round trip, payable at start.
Leave Bread Loaf Inn at 1:45 p. m.; arrive Middlebury 2:05 p. m.
Leave Middlebury at Rexall Drug Store 3:45, arrive Bread Loaf 4:05 p. m.
The taxi will leave on time and can not wait for stragglers.

DRY CLEANING: Agent collects and delivers articles left at the Main Desk. He
calls Mondays and Thursdays. Articles should be left at the desk by noon.
A coin-operated washing machine is located in the basement of Larch.

TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH.

1. Telephone calls: (a) A pay station for outgoing calls is on
the first floor of the Inn at the foot of the stairs near Bookstore.
The number is Dudley 8-9348. (b) Incoming calls for Bread Loaf
residents are handled through the Middlebury exchange: Dudley 8-4941.
(c) EXCEPT IN EMERGENCY, PLEASE HAVE INCOMING CALLS PLACED BEFORE
10:00 p. m., AT WHICH TIME THE SWITCHBOARD CLOSES.
Students should check mail boxes several times daily for messages and
notices of calls, especially around neartimes.

2. Telegrams are telephoned into Middlebury Western Union. This may
be done through either the main desk or the pay station. (If at the
latter, dial "Operator" and ask for Western Union.)

STUDENTS WHO ARE TO BE AWAY OVERNIGHT SHOULD INFORM THE DIRECTOR OF THE SCHOOL
OR THE MAIN DESK, AND LEAVE ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER WHERE THEY CAN BE REACHED.

INFORMATION ABOUT CLOSING DAYS

I. EARLY DEPARTURES

Guests who are leaving at any time before Saturday morning, August 12, should inform the desk so that the housekeeper and the dietitian may be advised.

II. COMMENCEMENT GUESTS

Seniors should secure at the desk blanks to fill out if they are to have guests staying in the dormitories or attending the commencement banquet. Only graduates may have guests in the dormitories.

III. POST OFFICE COMBINATIONS

Please return combination slips if you have not already done so.

IV. EXPRESS

Luggage and parcels to be expressed are sent Collect. Leave these articles in your room, properly tagged and addressed (each piece should have two tags, which can be obtained at the main desk.) Express will be collected and taken to the Middlebury station by the school truck Monday morning. Be sure to sign the express list on the dining-room bulletin board, giving all data required. THE SCHOOL ACCEPTS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY LUGGAGE OR PARCELS THAT ARE NOT PROPERLY TAGGED AND IDENTIFIED

V. MAILING PACKAGES

Parcel-post packages must be mailed Friday afternoon or Saturday morning at the latest. The best time for mailing packages is 9:30 to 4:30. The Bookstore sells twine, wrapping paper, stickers. Ask at the desk for cartons.

VI. CAR RIDES AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION

The school does not arrange for rides with owners of cars or give information on people driving to various sections of the country. Those desiring to secure rides should make their own arrangements.

For those wishing to find information about trains and planes, a travel agency is available in Middlebury; ask at the desk for the name.

Vii. TAXI TO MEET BUSES IN MIDDLEBURY.

Guests who wish transportation to meet buses at the Vermont Transfer station in Middlebury should sign the taxi list that will be posted on the dining-room bulletin board. The \$1 fee should be paid in advance at the desk to secure reservation, and will not be refunded. To prevent loss of luggage, guests should personally supervise the loading of their bags on the taxi and on the bus. The last bus that the taxi will meet is the 12:45 on Sunday. Taxi leaves a half-hour before bus time.

VIII. DEPOSITS

All deposits left in the office safe should be withdrawn by Saturday noon at the latest.

IX. FORWARDING ADDRESS

Leave a forwarding address at the desk only if it is different from the one published in the mimeographed school directory.

X. CLOSING MEAL

Sunday breakfast will be the last meal served for the session and will be at 7:30. The buildings will be closed and locked at 4:00, Sunday afternoon. It will not be possible to offer accommodations beyond that time. Check carefully to see that no personal belongings are left in your room. Cleaning will start immediately Sunday in preparation for the Writers' Conference.

XI. ACADEMIC MATTERS

Those who wish a transcript of the summer's work or of a complete record should get the proper form of application at the Secretary's Office. Applications for next year are also available in the same office.

Course choices will have to wait until the 1962 catalogue appears next winter. At that time requests should be sent in to Mr. Cook.

Becher

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

A Short Examination Conducted at the Bread Loaf School of English

August 12, 1961

Maurice Kelley

Tonight, I feel like another puritan, the Reverend John Dod, who died more than three centuries ago. The worldly son of a Cheshire gentleman, Dod came south to Cambridge, where in his unconverted state, he flew into such a rage at his college steward--who had accused him of not paying a bill--that he fell into a fever. Then, to quote an old account, "his sins came upon him like armed men, and the tyde of his thoughts was changed"; and later, in his new state of grace, I am able to report, Dod became a Fellow of Jesus College and Cambridge University Preacher. One day, riding on a lonely Cambridgeshire road, Dod was stopped by a band of undergraduates determined to have some fun at his expense. Recently, Dod had delivered a university sermon on drunkenness; and now, the undergraduates demanded that he dismount, don his gown, ascend a stump, and preach a sermon on the single word "malt." Unperturbed, Dod got off his horse, put on his robe, got up on a stump, and began: "Brethren, I am a little man, come at short warning, to deliver a brief discourse on a small subject." Now I have ascended no stump--though Middlebury College must own myriads of them; but I have donned a gown; as always, I come at shorter warning than I wish; and I will endeavor to keep my discourse short; but I do intend to speak on more than a single word. Actually, I propose to examine two related propositions frequently heard in literary circles today. These propositions are that an instinctive antipathy exists between the scholar and the poet (poet being used here in the renaissance sense that includes under the term all creative writers), and II,

that a college education has questionable value for the incipient poet. To illustrate the currency of these propositions and to examine their soundness, I shall center my attention on two recent articles.

The first article is a pertly written news story on the Faulkner Foundation, appearing in The New York Times of April 23, the pertinent parts of which are as follows:

That William Faulkner Foundation which was created in part with moneys received by Mr. F., from the Nobel Prize, seems to be going about its affairs in its own way--cool, detached, no nonsense. First move was to offer a prize for a notable first novel by an American, stipulating the judges would be young.... Second move has been to offer two or more scholarships in creative writing.... "The foundation directors /their report reads/ are not of the persuasion that a college education is either necessary or desirable for a creative writer, but being strongly of the conviction that a college education is probably going to be imposed on most literate Americans in the coming generation, they propose these scholarships... to counter the national academic and financial tides currently running against literary achievement."

So much for the Faulkner Foundation and its denigration of a college education--so far as the incipient poet is concerned--to the status of a necktie: something that people expect you to have and that will help you get a job.

The second article appears in the Princeton Alumni Weekly of November 11, 1960; it bears the title "'Creativity' and the University," and it is from the pen of the magazine's editor, John D. Davies.

Mr. Davies opens his article with two epigraphs. The first comes from a book entitled A Modest Proposal for Some Stress on Scholarship in Graduate Training, written by Jacob Viner, professor-emeritus of Princeton and a highly regarded economist and historian. The epigraph from Mr. Viner reads as follows:

I mean by it /scholarship/ nothing more than the pursuit of broad and exact knowledge of the history of the working of the human mind as revealed in

written records. I exclude from it, as belonging to a higher order of human endeavor, the creative arts and scientific discovery.

The second epigraph is William Butler Yeats's poem "The Scholars."

Bald heads forgetful of their sins,
Old, learned, respectable bald heads
Edit and annotate the lines
That young men, tossing in their beds,
Rhymed out in love's despair
To flatter beauty's ignorant ear.

All shuffle there; all cough in ink;
All wear the carpet with their shoes;
All think what other people think;
All know the man their neighbor knows.
Lord, what would they say
Did their Catullus walk that way.

Having thus set up his antipathy between scholar and poet, Mr.

Davies argues that

artistic creation is not--and cannot be--the basic concern of a humanistic education. Its aim is "a sense of the past"--a long look into the civilizations of history and the workings of different societies in perspective, a training which produces not artists but cultured, thoughtful and responsible citizens... not playwrights but playgoers, ... not writers but readers.... The very methods of work of the artist and scholar are different. The artist is traditionally instinctual and emotional, ... in rebellion against discipline.... Scott Fitzgerald gave up English courses because the professors teaching poetry didn't know what it was all about, he said, and "really hated it."

Therefore, concludes Mr. Davies, scholarship, "immersed in contemplating the masterpieces of past time, ... offers cold comfort to the young writer," who should rather "swing his bag of books and portable typewriter over his shoulder, quit the ivory tower for the world of the senses and experience."

Thus Mr. Viner, Mr. Yeats, and Mr. Davies. Except for remembering Mr. Viner's definition of scholarship--the pursuit of broad and exact knowledge of the history of the workings of the human mind as revealed in written records--except for remembering his definition, we need not linger on Mr. Viner. His concern is with the decline of

austere training in our graduate schools--the state of affairs of which Mr. Cook spoke in his opening address. Mr. Davies has offered Mr. Viner's definition primarily to set up the instinctive antipathy that he sees between scholar and poet.

But Mr. Yeats's poem "The Scholars" is another matter. It is central to the two propositions that I am examining; and I propose, at the risk of lese majesty, to take Mr. Yeats out to the Barn and put him to the questions.

"I have been reading your poem, Mr. Yeats, and I gather from it that you do not greatly care for scholars."

"In that conclusion you are quite correct, Mr. Kelley."

"Am I also correct in concluding that you very much admire the poetry of Catullus?"

"Yes, once in my youth, I narrowly escaped a flogging when I spent the whole time of a lengthy examination translating a short lyric of Catullus into English. I was spared the birch only because my schoolmaster was convinced that I would never amount to anything and was therefore not worth the physical effort involved in his correcting me."

"Then you must, Mr. Yeats, greatly prize your autograph manuscript of Catullus's poems."

"I have no manuscript in Catullus's autograph. I read my Catullus from a printed book."

"Your book, Mr. Yeats--I assume that it had an editor."

"Certainly, Mr. Kelley."

"And may I assume also that in learning to read Catullus you sometimes encountered words or difficult expressions with which you were not familiar?"

"Yes, Mr. Kelley, I frequently encountered strange words and

constructions?"

"Then pray, Sir, how did you determine the meaning of those words and constructions."

"Why, Mr. Kelley, my edition had an excellent glossary and many explanatory notes, which I regularly consulted."

"Then, Mr. Yeats, how can you be so contemptuous of scholars when you are indebted to them for all that you know about your beloved Catullus? Our earliest manuscript of Catullus dates from the fourteenth century, and that has been lost. Your text of Catullus results from a collation of two fourteenth century transcripts of that manuscript, the deficiencies of which have been remedied by emendations of a long line of renaissance and later scholars running from Muretus to Munro and Ellis. And your glossary and explanatory notes, Mr. Yeats, you likewise owe to a similarly long line of lexicographers and grammarians--humbler tribes of the scholarly breed. In the words of Lewis Carroll's young man, Father William, "Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

I could stop here with Chaucer's query, "What nedeth wordes mo?" were it not that Yeats's hostility puzzles me. No one shows higher regard for the poet than the true scholar. In his textual criticism, he is intent on determining precisely what the poet said; in his lexicographic labors, he is intent on determining precisely what the poet meant; in his biographical and historical researches, he is intent on seeing the poet precisely as he was, preferring this view--though he knows that it can never be complete--to that offered by the distorting glasses of later ages with different values and changed beliefs. If from these lower labors he ascends to the higher and headier element of criticism, the scholar critic does not evaluate by laying the poet on a procrustean bed of the latest vogue--colloquial diction, for

instance, or particularity of imagery; he seeks rather, as Pope advises, to "read each work of wit / With the same spirit that its author writ." Milton tells us that Shakespeare's monument is his petrified readers, turned into marble by their admiration. But it is the scholar who cuts the epitaph; and what present poet would scorn a tribute such as Gladys Wade's biography of Thomas Traherne? What saint in the calendar would not wish a demonstration of his right to sanctity comparable to that of R. W. Chambers's life of Thomas More? Res ipsae loquuntur! If there is an instinctive antipathy between scholar and poet--and I cannot believe that there really is one--it is not present, much less instinctive, in the true scholar; it must exist --and unwarrantably--in the poet alone. And even there, its existence may be questioned. Yeats did not always persist in his crusty view of scholarship, for in a poem published three years after "The Scholars" he was to declare that "Truth flourishes where the student's lamp has shone." And John Milton combined in a superlative way the callings of both poet and scholar. His Comus was the last and greatest of the renaissance masks; his "Lycidas" the finest of English pastoral elegies, and perhaps the most perfect short poem in the language; and as Shakespeare laid the capstone on blank verse drama, so did Milton make it impossible for any subsequent poet to write heroic narrative verse without suffering from comparison with Paradise Lost. After you have considered these accomplishments, read the textual notes of the Oxford and Budé editions of Euripides, and there you will find that six of Milton's emendations are accepted readings of our modern, Greek text. As a measure of this accomplishment, consider the famous English classical scholar, Richard Bentley. Bentley is reported to have offered between six and seven hundred emendations to the text of Horace. Of these, only two or three are today found in stan-

dard editions. In Milton scholar and poet bred no antipathy. The scholar helped make the poet, and the poet aided the scholar.

With this, let us move to our second proposition: that a college education is of questionable value to the incipient poet--a proposition that tempts me to exclaim with Milton's Satan, "strange point and new." Strange and new in that English critics of the past, drawing their doctrines from renaissance Italian and earlier classical criticism, have uniformly and continuously held that the function of poetry is to teach and delight; and in the history of English literature, the practice of our truly major poets--Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth--amply illustrates this doctrine. If, then, teaching is a primary function of the poet, it follows that the poet should be an educated man.

I have learnt [proclaims Milton in one of his academic exercises] from the writings and sayings of wise men that nothing common or mediocre can be tolerated in an orator any more than in a poet, and he who would be an orator in reality as well as in repute must first acquire a thorough knowledge of all the arts and sciences to form a complete background to his own calling.

Though Milton did not like the college curriculum--he later described it as a "feast of sow thistles," he did put in seven years at Cambridge, three more than the conventional and required four; and later also he was to thank one of his political enemies for having libelled him because the libel gave him "an apt occasion to acknowledge publicly with all grateful mind that more than ordinary favor and respect which I found... at the hands of those courteous and learned men, the fellows of that college where I spent some years." Wordsworth also--though in a backhanded manner--was to acknowledge the importance of a humanistic education to the beginning poet. Like Milton, Wordsworth disliked Cambridge; but when in his greatest poem, The Prelude,

he took stock of his qualifications as a poet, he devoted one whole book, the third, to his residence at Cambridge. At St. John's College Wordsworth would not apply himself to his studies; he preferred rather to imagine a university at which he would work.

Not that I slighted books,--that were to lack
 All sense,--but other passions in me ruled,
 Passions more fervent, making me less prompt
 To in-door study than was wise or well,
 Or suited to those years. Yet I, though used
 In magisterial liberty to rove,
 Culling such flowers of learning as might tempt
 A random choice, could shadow forth a place
 (If now I yield not to a flattering dream)
 Whose studious aspect should have bent me down
 To instantaneous service; should at once
 Have made me pay to science and to arts
 And to written lore, acknowledged my liege lord,
 A homage frankly offered up, like that
 Which I had paid to nature. Toil and Pains
 In this recess, by thoughtful fancy built,
 Should spread from heart to heart; and stately groves,
 Majestic edifices, should not want
 A corresponding dignity within.
 The congregating temper that pervades
 Our unripe years, not wasted, should be taught
 To minister to works of high attempt--
 Work which the enthusiast would perform with love.
 Youth should be averted, religiously possessed
 With a conviction of the power that waits
 On knowledge when sincerely sought and prized
 For its own sake, on glory and on praise
 If but by labor won, and fit to endure
 The passing day; should learn to put aside
 Her trappings here, should strip them off abashed
 Before antiquity and steadfast truth
 And strong book-mindedness; and over all
 A healthy sound simplicity should reign,
 A seemly plainness, name it what you will,
 Republican and pious.

Milton and Wordsworth. I call no further witnesses. After these two is it necessary to do more than ask this question: if the function of the poet is to teach--and those of the great tradition have always done so--how can the incipient poet be harmed by a humanistic education, by spending four years, to quote Mr. Viner, in "the pursuit of broad and exact knowledge of the history of the working of the human mind as revealed in written records"?

I began this discourse by calling the two beliefs that I proposed to examine "propositions." I did so because I had not yet examined the soundness of what they proposed. Having done so, I will now call them "vulgar errors." "Vulgar" because they enjoy wide acceptance in literary and critical circles of our day. "Errors" because they, like Sir Thomas Browne's pseudodoxia epidemica, cannot stand up under scrutiny. Therefore, Graduating Class of 1961, I would advise you to have no part in perpetuating them. I would ask you, rather, to speak always respectfully of scholars and scholarship. It is true that there have been many bad scholars who by no means even approximate the picture of the ideal one that I have painted; but this fact should not lead you to condemn the whole craft. A calling should be judged by the best that it produces, not the worst. If we judge only by the worst, the excellent and highly deserved reputation of poetry might not survive the scribbling of its myriads of poor practitioners. The creative arts, as Mr. Viner tells us, belong to "a higher order of human endeavor." Scholarship is ancillary to them. The task of the scholar is like that of the saddler: his first aim, Sir Philip Sidney tells us, "is to make a good saddle, but his farther end is to serve a nobler faculty, which is horsemanship." Poet and scholar are like Wit and Judgment. These, Pope tells us, "often are at strife, / Though meant each other's aid like man and wife."

I would also ask you to speak well of colleges and the humanistic education that they offer. As Mr. Davies maintains, liberal arts colleges are not trade or professional schools. They have no more obligation to set up comprehensive creative writing programs and literary work-shops than they have to maintain a shoe factory or practice law courts. A liberal education has the same relation to poetry and the

other professions as calisthenics have to the various varsity sports. Calisthenics are not intended to train a man to be a star quarterback or all-American goalie, but they will prepare him to become one if he has the requisite gifts of coordination, balance, and quick reaction. When Mr. Davies advises the young writer to pass up college, he is suggesting that the young man skip calisthenics. The ways of the scholar and the poet are in many respects different, but not different to the exclusive degree that Mr. Davies and our neo-romantic age would make them. If Scott Fitzgerald got nothing from his English courses at Princeton, I am disposed to find the fault in him rather than in his professors. At a later time, I sat under the same men as he; and those men not only knew what poetry was about but they also loved it.

And finally, I would ask you to be cautious about accepting new and startling propositions concerning scholars, poets, and poetry--particularly if the bias of such propositions is anti-intellectual. The end of man's learning, Sidney tells us, is "to know, and by knowledge to lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body to the enjoying of his own divine essence." So when you meet new propositions, such as the two that I have examined, do not uncritically accept or automatically reject them. Rather, examine them. Inspect them as carefully as Joseph Battell must have inspected hundreds of Morgan horses as he perfected his breed. And having so examined, accept or reject, keeping always in mind the too-often unheeded advice of Alexander Pope:

Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.



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